

ANOTHER FOREST RESERVE.

This One is a Good Thing, and is the Petrified Forest Near Holbrook.

Land Commissioner Hermann is at work on a special report to the secretary of the interior, recommending that a forest reserve be made out of the petrified forest of Arizona.

Recent reports received by the interior department about the condition of this forest indicate that it is rapidly being used up for commercial purposes, and unless the government steps in to stop the despoliment the whole forest, which is one of the greatest natural curiosities in the world, will disappear. There is now building in Denver a hotel, all the walls of which are to be faced with the silicified wood to be taken from the forest, and all the tables for the hotel are also to be made of it. At this rate of consumption it would not be long before all the petrified wood would be used up. Commissioner Hermann thinks that there is immediate necessity for action on the part of the department. It is his opinion the best way in which the forest can be preserved is to make it a forest reserve.

The forest is located near Holbrook, in Apache county, Arizona. The largest and finest specimens of silicified wood in the world are taken from it. Whole trunks of trees and stumps with portions of the roots are found there, converted into stone as dense and hard as the finest agate. Every cell and every fiber of the former wood is preserved in stone. A forest of trees appears to have been entombed in the rocks and to have been preserved by a slow process of replacement by silica from solutions permeating the bed. Subsequently the surrounding sediments were washed away, but the enduring fossils of the trees remained.

Tons upon tons of specimens have

been taken away by collectors and dealers. A company has been formed in South Dakota for cutting and polishing stone for architectural and decorative work. Sections of these trees four feet in diameter and large enough for the tops of tables have been cut and polished. Many specimens were shown at the Paris exposition, where they were greatly admired for the perfect preservation of every detail of structure of the wood, for the very high polish and for their exquisite interblending of colors in the mass, due to the presence of various oxides in the original silicifying solutions. No other country in the world, it is claimed, can send to the lapidary such magnificent raw material of this nature as the petrified forests of Arizona afford. Not even the imperial works at Ekaterinburg in Russia, with their wealth of kalkansto jasper, massive malachite and other superb ornamental stones, can rival the beauty of the agatized wood of Arizona.

Commissioner Hermann is confident that Secretary Bliss will agree with him, when the facts are brought to his attention, of the wisdom of making some provision to protect this wonderful curiosity from despoliment.—Mining and Scientific Press.

The Artesian Belt.

The striking of another flow of water in the artesian belt at St. David, in Cochise county, by Peter Gould, makes the twenty-sixth artesian well now flowing at that thriving settlement and agricultural paradise.

Mr. Gould has had one well flowing for several months, giving about fifty-five gallons per minute. This well was down 433 feet, but the new well, not over 200 feet from the other, is down but 395 feet, and strange as it may seem gives a much stronger flow than the first, measuring nearly seventy gallons per minute, and throws the water fully ten inches above the two-inch pipe.